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THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH.

INSTITUTIONS can do their work much better if the function which it is proper for them to perform is accurately defined. Perhaps the church is not adjusted to the needs of society, and this may be the reason why it does not meet the test to which it is put. Does it succeed in bringing humanity to a state of high moral life? The result of the work of the church should be full ethical development, not simply in scattered individuals, but in a multitude, so that it can be said in truth that a developed ethical life is possessed by the social organism. Institutions for intellectual development, grouped together and spoken of in this article as the college, are subject to a like test,— Do they educate the mass, so that the social organism is characterized by high intelligence? Neither the church nor the college as yet performs its mission fully. But the college has determined its proper function and does its work systematically; the church seems to be in doubt, and its work is desultory.

The rise of sociology is the salvation of the church, because by the application of the sociologic method the function of the church as a social institution can be accurately defined. It is probable that, on analysis, it will be found that there is some special common end to the accomplishment of which society has a right to ask each church to direct its energy. If this common end of labor can be discovered, then the denominations may feel it their duty to work for this, and harmony and efficiency of work may come naturally and easily.

Different meanings are sometimes conveyed to different readers by the same word, and this makes it necessary for the writer to state the meaning which he wishes a few important words to carry. It is not claimed that the definitions given are final. It is not the purpose of this article to determine what is ethical and what is religious, nor what the word "educational" ought to mean when

used by a writer of good English. The definitions are simply a means to the understanding of the thought herein presented.

"Life" is thought of as the potential principle of all existence. "Religion" is the human being's personal, feeling-appreciation of its relations to the Infinite Life, the God-Life. "Religious life" is life characterized by a more or less deep experience of religion. "Ethics" is the science of the conduct of human beings considered as units in an inclusive social organism, society. In its practical effort ethics seeks to state the results of human actions, and from these results to determine by insight the actions best suited to serve the purpose inherent in each human being's life. "Ethical life" is life characterized by a more or less deep experience of obligation to fulfill the ideal conduct which ethics sets up. A distinction is recognized between the ethical and the religious life. The fact that many experience a strong feeling of communion between themselves and their God, and yet do not experience a mastering obligation to live true to ethical ideals, leads the writer to designate them as of high religious life and of low ethical life. There are many who have high ethical life and low religious life. The expression, "the development of the ethical and religious life" means the development of the potential principle of existence indwelling in the individual into an experience of strong sympathy with the Infinite God-Life, and of mastering obligation to act always according to conscience. "Church" is the term used to designate the institution of society which has interested itself practically and theoretically in matters of ethics and religion. The term includes all organizations devoted to this kind of work, no matter by what prophet they have been founded.

What is the proper function of this church? The church is to help human beings perform their great life-task. This task must be the realization of some individual, personal ideal. This ideal is determined for each by the characteristics of his own internal life and by the needs of the environing life; it is both self-centered and altruistic. And the process by which this ideal for each is gained by each is a process of personal development.

The usual function of institutions is to serve the individual in his development. The progress of society comes through the development of the individual. The state furnishes the freedom which results from protection against interference by others, and freedom must be had in order to make the realization of the individual, personal, ideal possible. The college assists in gaining intellectual strength. It serves other ends, but serves this chiefly. The home plays a large part in the fulfillment of the individual ideal by giving opportunity for the perpetuation of life in children, and for gaining the completeness of the individual.

The proper function of the church is like to that of the state, the college and the home. The church has all along been of service, though indirectly and by somewhat crude methods, in the struggle for self-realization. The church, to perform its function, needs to render direct and skillful assistance. The ideal self is gained by personal growth, and if the church is to help in the gaining of this ideal self, it must be an institution for the production of development. But the production of development is education, and the church is, therefore, in the last analysis, an educational institution.

A common use of the word "educational" makes it mean the disciplinary processes connected with intellectual strength-gathering. The process of strengthening physical life is called "training." But educational processes are not always directed toward the development of intellectual life. The gymnasium teacher is an educator. It is educational discipline by which he produces physical strength and perfect control of strength. The church, producing as it does a development of life, is in the full sense of the word an educational institution, and is to be classed with institutions of this kind.

The special work of the church is the education of the ethical and religious life. The discipline of the college will contribute to this, and that of the church will contribute to intellectual development, but the centers of the activities of the two institutions are distinct. It is the business of the church to

educate humanity into highly developed ethical and religious life.

If the above analysis of the relation of the church to society is correct, it becomes clear that society has a right to ask each church organization to furnish each human being intrusted to its care a discipline calculated to produce growth into developed ethical and religious life. Each church is to be judged according to its fruits. The young, crude life of its children is to be skillfully assisted in its efforts to gain fully developed ethical and religious manhood and womanhood. That church which produces men and women who live intelligently and in perfect devotion to the fulfillment of their highest ideals, is the church that is greatest, because it serves society's needs.

Denominational divisions have arisen from the belief that God has given a revelation of the divine law. Each group united about a peculiar interpretation of the revelation has formed itself into a church, for the purpose of advocating its interpretation. The motive which has governed the organization of these denominations has been a determination to carry on a propaganda, whether the various interpretations are justified or not. The resulting organizations are, therefore, such as to serve only indirectly the great end of existence for the human being, the realization of the individual, personal ideal. An organization formed for the purpose of subduing all to belief in a particular system of ethical and religious doctrines in many ways obstructs the development of the individual. These are times in which the rights of the individual are being determined: each is king and servant. The organization of the church needs to be somewhat changed, and suited closely to the function which it is proper for the church to perform, the education of the ethical and religious life. The church that serves society as it is today must needs be an educational institution instead of an organ for propaganda.

Since the church has an educational function, it follows that its proper method of work will be determined by the application of general educational principles to its special ends. It will not do for the church to adopt the methods of the college *in toto*. The

education of ethical and religious life is a different task from the production of intellectual development. To bring the growing mind to an understanding of the subject of ethics is to achieve an intellectual end, but that to be gained in ethical education is not simply an intellectual understanding of the right. An experience of mastering obligation to live true to the ethical ideals which the intelligence determines to be right, is to be produced. We want men of honor and as unselfish as the Christ. Religious education brings not simply intellectual insight into the infinite, but, also, a feeling of personal union with the superpersonal God-life. Under a powerful religious education the child is touched with love of every living thing. The boy and the girl hear the voice of nature in the prattle of the brook; the trees speak by the rustling of their leaves; the thunder tells of power to be trusted, not feared. Death is nature's doing, and life is eternal. Courage, contentment, ambition to have part in the great world-struggle, possess the man and the woman, because of love for the God in whom they live and move and have their being. The aged lie down in peace: their trust is sufficient in the hour of death. The mourners are content to finish their tasks: they see the face of love. So the methods of the church must be suited to its special field. It holds services rich in inspiring music, in strong expressions of religious feeling, and in these services the members find opportunity for the expression of their own personal spontaneous emotions. Going to church is going to the very heart of things, to gain renewal of life. The room in which the religious service is held is an expression of the universal spirit; the large chorus interprets the God of love; the leader of the service is at one with his God, and speaks from the heart. Out of the experience of religion comes enthusiasm to live the life of high ideals. The college can never do the work of the church; these institutions stand coöperating and coördinate institutions. Educational principles govern the work of both, but each must needs have its own methods.

In order that different kinds of churches may be compared, a name is needed for this church which considers its functions

those of an educational institution, and which is founded on the great purpose of educating ethical and religious life. The best name in sight is the Educational Church.

A course of discipline must be arranged for this educational church. The life of the child, the boys and girls, the young people, those of middle age, and of the aged, is to be supplied its proper food Those who have large capacity for religious experience are to be furnished a religious service far richer than that furnished by most propaganda-loving churches. People who have little or no capacity for religious experience are to be impressed with the sociologic sanctions for conduct, to be stimulated by lectures in applied ethics and by the presentation of the beauty of ethical ideals. The crude methods of the churches of the ordinary type are to give place to more skillful.

There are many practical questions of organization, but with these this paper does not deal. They can wait for solution until after sociology has determined the function of the church. If the educational church ought to be, then many a church will in time become the fulfillment of this ideal.

A course of discipline calculated to produce the results which it is the function of the church to achieve, is now submitted for consideration. The course here given is not wholly visionary, because the Children's School of Ethics and Religion, the Junior and Young People's Clubs for Personal Development, the Young People's Class in Ethics, and the Religious Service of the Senior Church have been proved by experiment to produce the results which they aim to produce. The other departments outlined seem essential to completeness of institutional life.

THE EDUCATIONAL CHURCH.

The following is the discipline.

AGE.	DEPARTMENT.
6 to 8	Children's School of Ethics and Religion, Kindergarten.
8 to 10	" " " " Boys' and Girls' Dep't.
10 to 12	" " " " Children's Department.
12 to 14	" " " " Senior Department.
14 to 17	Junior Church.

AGE.	DEPARTMENT.
14 to 17	Junior Club for Personal Development.
17 to ?	Senior Church, Religious Services.
	" " Ethical Lectures.
17 to 20	Young People's Class in Ethics.
17 to 21[1]	Young People's Club for Personal Development.
20 to 23	Bible Class.
23 to 25	Class in Religious Philosophy and Comparative Religions.
25 to ?	Class in Social Problems.
Adults	Class in Philanthropy.

PREACHERS AND TEACHERS.

Senior Preacher.	Senior Church, the Religious Services.
	" " Short course of Ethical Lectures.
	Bible Class.
	Class in Religious Philosophy and Comparative Religions.
Junior Preacher.	Junior Church.
	Superintendent of C. S. of E. & R. and Teacher of Class A., Senior Department.
	Director of the Y. P. C. for P. D., and its teacher of Sociology.
Seven Teachers in C. S. of E. and R.	Kindergartners, 2
	Children's Department, 2
	Boys' and Girls' Dept, 2
	Senior Department, 1 And this teacher is also the Director of the J. C. for P. D.
Teacher of Ethics.	Young People's Class in Ethics, and of Anthropology, in Y. P. C. for P. D.
Teacher of	Class in Social Problems, and of American Political Ideas, in Y. P. C. for P. D.
Teacher of	Class in Philanthropy
Various Lecturers.	Senior Church, the Ethical Lectures.

THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OF ETHICS AND RELIGION.

An eight years' course. Sundays, 12 to 1:15.

GENERAL EXERCISES.

Roll call.
Violin solo. (Kindergarten withdraws.)
Hymn.
Scripture reading.
Extempore prayer.

[1] All sessions come on Sundays or Fridays.

Response service.
Hymn.
Poem.
Class sessions.
Hymn. (Kindergarten returns with other classes.)
Children's prayer.
Song of praise.

KINDERGARTEN. Children about 3 to 8 years of age.

Class B. Ethical Ideals.

Stories of the obedient, respectful, helpful child.

Class A. Ethical Ideals.

Stories of the generous, loving, truthful child.

Both Classes. Religious Ideas.

God the One who makes all things live and move and have their being. All are his children.

INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Teach without making much explanation of why it is right to do this and not that. Set forth ethical ideals by means of stories, and incite the scholars to imitate the children of the stories. Set forth religious ideas by means of talks about plants and animals; get the scholars to watch them live.

The opening and closing of the kindergarten is to be by means of a liturgy written for this department. The kindergarten meets with the rest of the school for the musical opening, and joins also in the closing exercises.

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT. About 8 to 10 years of age.

Class B. Ethical ideals.

Elementary discussion of the qualities of the

obedient, helpful, loving,
respectful, generous, truthful child.

This child is to be made to appear a reasonable and possible child.

Class A. Ethical ideals.

Elementary discussion of the qualities of the

strong, intelligent, useful,
industrious, thoughtful, brave,
skillful, unselfish, conscientious men and women.

The boys and girls are to become men and women, and the school hopes that these qualities will be gained by them.

Both Classes. Religious ideas.

God the life of nature wants his children to grow into the fulfillment of their highest ideals. Conscience is the voice of God, and is to be obeyed. Punishment comes when conscience is disobeyed. True joy comes from obedience to God's voice.

INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Study the character of the scholars and apply these personal ideals to their lives. Make continual expression of your love for nature, and of the greatness and power and love possessed by the God-life which you feel to be in nature. Express your longing to become perfectly obedient to the voice of conscience.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' DEPARTMENT. About 10 to 12 years of age.

Class B. Ethical Ideals.

Biographical studies of the youth of men and women who illustrate the fulfillment of the ideals of the school.

Example. Abraham Lincoln.

strong,	unselfish,	conscientious,
intelligent,	truthful,	brave.
thoughtful,	useful,	

Religious Ideas.

The earth has grown from a ball of fire to its present state, and the God-life has controlled its growth. The God-life is through and through all the universe, and is to be trusted and obeyed. Study the religious experiences of the men and women chosen to illustrate the ethical ideals

Class A. Ethical Ideals.

Biographical study of the lives of Jesus and his apostles.

Religious ideas.

The religious ideas and experiences of Jesus and his apostles.

SENIOR DEPARTMENT. About 12 to 14 years of age.

Class B. Ethical Ideals.

A discussion, systematic and thorough, of the ideals of the school.

obedient,	strong,	useful,
respectful,	industrious,	brave,
helpful,	skillful,	conscientious,
generous,	intelligent,	self-controlled,
loving,	thoughtful,	ambitious men and women.
truthful,	unselfish,	

Religious Ideas.

The meaning of all important common religious terms and phrases.

Class A. Ethical Ideals.

Discussion of the question: For what is it worth while to live? Is it worth while to live according to conscience and one's highest ideals?

A systematic discussion of fundamental religious ideas.

NOTE.—Only those who do the work satisfactorily are allowed to remain members of the school, and only those who do the last two years intelligently and earnestly are allowed to graduate. A certificate of graduation is given.

JUNIOR CHURCH. Sundays, 4:00 to 5:15.

A three years' course. Young people about 14 to 17 years of age.

Ethical and Religious Services.

Organ voluntary.
Violin solo.
Hymn.
Scripture reading.
Response service.

a. Expressions of high ethical sentiment and deep religious feeling, read in concert.

b. Written prayers read by the preacher and responded to by the worshipers.

c. Musical expressions of thanksgiving, sung in concert.

Sermon. (Subjects appropriate to this period of life and arranged in a three years' course.)
Hymn-anthem.
Reading of original essays. (Topics in ethics and religion assigned.)
Anthem.
Discussion of the sermon and essays.
Extempore prayer.
Philanthropic offering.
Hymn.
Benediction.
Song of praise.
Instrumental postlude.

NOTE.—This service is to have all the formalities of the ordinary adult church service, but the thought of the hymns, scripture, sermon and essays is to be suited to the needs of the young people. This Junior Church, if contrasted with the Senior Church, will be found more emotional and its movement more rapid. A certificate is given to those who complete the work of the Junior Church and Junior Club.

JUNIOR CLUB FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. Fridays, 7:30 to 9:00.

Open to boys and girls over 14 years of age.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Call to order.
Roll call.
Original work by members of the club.
Talk by the director of the club.
General games.

This club is in charge of a competent director, and is designed to train the boys and girls into self-reliance, to enable them to make use of their

powers when in formal association with others, to bring them into sympathy with matters of public interest, and to give them the discipline to be gotten out of games.

The club binds its members together in devotion to the principle of personal development, and only those who stand firm in the principle are allowed to continue members.

The original work centers in social and current topics. The talks of the director cover practical topics pertinent to the daily lives of the members and are arranged to cover three years, so that by remaining a member for three years the entire course will be accomplished.

SENIOR CHURCH. Sundays.

Membership in the Senior Church implies the intention to attend its services regularly. One who does not feel the need of a religious service may elect to attend simply the ethical lectures.

Religious Service, 10:30 to 11:45.

Organ voluntary.
Violin solo.
Hymn.
Poem.
Ethical and religious liturgy.
Anthem.
Scripture.
Hymn-anthem.
Prayer.
Choral response by congregation.
Sermon. (A discussion of religious theme, and an expression of personal religious experience.)
Philanthropic offering.
Hymn.
Closing ethical and religious liturgy.
Benediction.
Song of praise.
Organ postlude.

Ethical Lectures. 7:45 to 9:00.

Address. On some subject of applied ethics. The lecturer is judicial in his treatment of the theme; he strives to assist the people to make wise judgments in matters of public and immediate interest.

Discussion of the address. By those to whom the privilege has been granted, because of their fitness and ability.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLASS IN ETHICS. Sundays, 12:00 to 1:15.

This class offers a three years' course.

Course of Study.

The elements of ethics.

Practical ethical questions.

The ethical ideals of the prophets (this word is interpreted as referring to sacred and secular writers).

These three years of work need not be taken in any prescribed order. Each year is made a distinct course. It is possible to enter the class at the beginning of any year, and to take the course in the order which happens to come, without serious loss from disarrangement.

Examinations are held at the end of each year, and only those who do the work satisfactorily are allowed to continue members of the class. Certificates of graduation are given to those who complete the entire course.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLUB FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. Fridays, 8:00 to 9:45

Open to any young man or woman of good reputation.

Order of Business.

Call to order.

Roll call.

Reading of minutes.

Reception of new members.

Study classes.

Social fifteen minutes.

Unfinished business.

New business.

Reading of fines.

Adjournment.

The club offers three years of prescribed work, and further electives.

Course of Study.

Anthropology.

Sociology.

American political ideas.

Elective work according to the choice of the members.

The studies of the club are chosen with reference to the central purpose of the club, personal development. Each member is expected to continue true to this principle. The course is calculated to develop an appreciation of the part which the individual plays in the social organism, and to equip the members for their social service as members of their community. A certificate of work done is given to those who complete the prescribed work.

BIBLE CLASS. Sundays, 12:00 to 1:15.

This class is open to those who have finished the course of the Young People's Class in Ethics, and to others whom the teacher may consider prepared.

Course of Study. Three years of work.

Old Testament history, and the development of ethical and religious ideas during this period.

New Testament history, and the development of ethical and religious ideas during this period.

The Development of the Christian Church.

Regular attendance is required, and faithful work expected. A certificate of graduation is given on examination.

CLASS IN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS.

Fridays, 8:00 to 10:00.

This class is open to those who have taken the work of the Bible Class, and to others whom the teacher may consider prepared.

Course of Study. Two years' work.

Religious philosophy.

Comparative religions.

Regular attendance is required, and faithful work expected. A certificate of graduation is given on examination.

CLASS IN SOCIAL PROBLEMS. Sundays, 12:00 to 1:15.

This class is open to adults, and it is expected that those who join this class are somewhat prepared to deal with social problems. The class is under a competent leader, and deals continually with the social questions of the day. If the class so determines, it may enter upon practical work, and seek to bring about developments in which it believes.

CLASS IN PHILANTHROPY. Sundays, 4:00 to 5:15.

This class is open to those who wish to engage in philanthropic work and the control of the philanthropies of the church are in the hands of a committee of five, all of whom are graduates of this class.

Course of Study. Two years and to be followed by as long a period of practical work as possible.

The principles of philanthropy.

The methods of successful philanthropies.

Examinations are held, and certificates of graduation given.

PHILANTHROPIC WORK.

The different departments of the Children's School, the Junior Church, and the Senior Church, are each engaged in special and appropriate philanthropic work.

The above plan involves three leading departments, the Senior Church, with its religious and ethical services, the Junior Church, and the Children's School of Ethics and Religion. The clubs and classes are supplementary to these. Most well-con-

ducted churches are already working on very much these lines. This outline possesses system, and, if worked to, would induce a thoroughness which the work of the ordinary church does not have.

In order to become an Educational Church, the ordinary church has but to give itself heart and soul to the perfecting of the ethical and religious life of its members, to look upon the children as worthy of skillful help, and to test itself by its ability to send forth into society men and women free from ethical crudeness, devoted to the fulfillment of their highest ideals, and aglow with that deep and wide sympathy which is religion.

E. M. FAIRCHILD.

TROY, N. Y.